





## ARDEA PACIFICA, *Lath.*

### Pacific Heron.

*Ardea pacifica*, Lath. Ind. Orn. Supp., p. lxx.—Jard. and Selb. Ill. Orn., vol. ii. pl. 90.—Swains. Class. of Birds, vol. ii. p. 354.—List of Birds in Brit. Mus. Coll., Part III. p. 77.

*Pacific Heron*, Lath. Gen. Syn. Supp., vol. ii. p. 305.—Ib. Gen. Hist., vol. ix. p. 127.

*Ardea Ballaragang*, Wagl. Syst. Av. Gen. Ardea, sp. 5.

*Jil-lee-mil-yun*, Aborigines of the lowland, and

*Koon-jere*, Aborigines of the mountain districts of Western Australia.

*White-necked Heron* of the Colonists.

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THE *Ardea pacifica* appears to be a summer visitor to the whole of the southern coast of Australia. In New South Wales its occurrence depends in a great degree upon the nature of the season; that is, if much rain has fallen, the lagoons and rivers become filled, and abounding with frogs, newts, and aquatic insects: its presence may be looked for in all such situations, where it wades about in search of the animals enumerated, upon all of which it feeds with avidity, and partakes less of fish than other herons. No one of the *Ardeidæ* is more ornamental to the landscape than the present bird, its white neck offering a decided and pleasing contrast to the green colouring of the herbage with which it is surrounded; its walk too is characterized by a greater degree of stateliness and grace than that of most of the other members of the group.

In general it merely flies from district to district in search of a more abundant supply of food; but when necessity requires, it is capable of performing extensive journeys.

The stomach is capacious and membranous.

Considerable variation exists in the colouring of this species, some specimens having the neck wholly white, while others have the centre of that part spotted with black.

The sexes when fully adult are so nearly alike, that it is only by the smaller size of the female that they can be distinguished from each other.

Head, neck and elongated feathers of the breast white, tinged with purplish grey; on the forepart of the neck a series of irregularly placed black spots; upper surface, wings and tail bluish black, glossed with green on the back and wing-coverts; under surface chocolate-brown, each feather of the abdomen with a broad stripe of white down the centre; feathers of the breast and the elongated scapularies deep purplish red, the tips and outer webs of some of the latter dull green; shoulder and edge of the wing pure white; upper mandible black, lower part of the under mandible yellowish olive in some specimens and yellowish horn-colour in others; irides in some specimens rich primrose-yellow, and in others very dark brown; upper part of the tarsi yellowish olive; feet black; orbits greenish yellow, becoming more yellow immediately before and round the eye.

The figure represents a male about two-thirds of the natural size.